

## Nationwide Opportunities in the Federal Railroad Administration - Reissued 2002

### Railroad Safety Inspector, GS-2121-12

The job of administering and enforcing Federal railroad regulations is the responsibility of the Department of Transportation, Federal Railroad Administration ([www.fra.dot.gov](http://www.fra.dot.gov)). Railroad Safety Inspectors are needed to accomplish this mission and maintain safe operating conditions throughout the Nation's network of rail lines. The job of the Inspectors is to inspect for compliance with Federal laws, regulations, rules and standards and to conduct and report on accident investigations. The Inspector writes reports of findings and seeks correction of unsafe conditions and may be called upon to testify as an expert witness in civil suits. The demands of these jobs are many, requiring skill in evaluation, fact-finding, report writing; comprehension and application of technical and regulatory standards; the ability to gain the cooperation of individuals and organizations; and knowledge of methods used in installation, operation, maintenance or manufacturing of railroad equipment and systems. Inspectors are needed in five specializations which include the following duties in addition to investigation and reporting on accidents:

#### A Signals and Train Control Inspector

- applies knowledge of electronics, railroad operations, and Federal regulations to inspect and test carrier signal and train control systems;
- determines compliance with regulations and detects safety hazards;
- investigates and makes recommendations on carrier requests for discontinuance of signal and train control systems;
- reviews specifications and plans of railroads for constructing or rebuilding signal and train control systems.

#### A Track Inspector

- applies knowledge of track construction and maintenance and Federal regulations to inspect the track structure and related appurtenances;
- determines compliance with regulations for various classes of track and detects safety

hazards;

- works with the railroad and their employees, state and local governments to promote understanding of and compliance with the Federal Track Safety Standards;
- investigates and makes recommendations on carrier requests for waiver of the Federal Track Safety Standards.

#### A Motive Power & Equipment Inspector

- applies knowledge of locomotive and car construction and maintenance and applicable Federal laws and standards to inspect locomotives, passenger and freight cars, air brakes and other safety appliances;
- determines compliance with regulations and detects safety hazards;
- inspects and tests component parts at manufacturers' plants and at railroad and contracted railroad repair facilities to ensure compliance with regulations.

#### A Hazardous Materials Inspector

- under the authority of the Transportation of Explosive and Dangerous Article Act Regulations (49 CFR 100-199), investigates the methods of construction, testing and retesting of bulk railroad tank containers such as tank cars used for transportation of hazardous materials;
- inspects shipper's packaging, marking, labeling and documentation of rail shipments, and the lading, unloading, switching and movement by rail of cars containing hazardous materials to determine compliance with regulations and to detect safety hazards;
- works with the Association of American Railroads, railroads and industrial employers, and state and local governments to promote understanding of and compliance with

hazardous

- materials regulations;
- observes new methods of packaging, testing, shipping and transport of hazardous materials by rail, determines adequacy of public safety afforded and reports findings to higher organization levels with recommendations for amendments to current regulation.

## **An Operating Practices Inspector**

- applies knowledge of railroad operations and railroad operating rules to examine carrier operating rules, employee qualification guidelines and carrier training and testing programs to determine compliance with regulations under the Railway Safety Act of 1970;
- reviews carrier records to determine compliance with railroad occupational safety and health standards, the Hours of Service Act, and accident and personal injury reporting requirements;
- determines compliance with regulations and detects safety hazards in railroad operations.

## **WHERE THE JOBS ARE**

Railroad Safety Inspector positions are found in the Federal Railroad Administration, Department of Transportation, and are located throughout the United States.

## **PAY AND GRADE LEVEL**

Grade GS-12 is covered in this brochure. Because of frequent salary rate adjustments and locality-based pay adjustments, pay is not quoted in this brochure. For the latest salary information, contact the nearest Federal Job Information Center, U.S. Office of Personnel Management ([www.opm.gov/oca/payrates/index.htm](http://www.opm.gov/oca/payrates/index.htm)).

## **TRAVEL**

Railroad Safety Inspectors travel frequently which requires being away from the official duty station for several consecutive nights.

## **QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS -BASIS OF RATING**

**NO WRITTEN TEST IS REQUIRED.** Ratings will be based on an evaluation of the experience, training and/or education you describe in your application and on the responses to questions in the supplemental qualifications statement. Ratings are given on a scale of 70 to 100, based on the extent and quality of experience, training and education. You will be rated for only the option(s) you indicate on the application materials.

## **EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS**

*All applicants must be U.S. citizens.*

**All applicants must have progressively responsible railroad experience which demonstrates:**

- Broad knowledge of the railroad industry including economic and operating considerations and equipment;
- Knowledge of the general safety and health principles and practices applicable to the railroad industry;
- Knowledge of railroad accident investigation techniques; and
- Skill in written and oral communication.

## **Experience in the railroad industry is required.**

In addition, applicants for Inspector positions must demonstrate possession of the knowledge, skills, and abilities for the specialization for which application is made to the degree required by the position, as follows:

### **SIGNALS AND TRAIN CONTROL**

Progressively responsible experience which demonstrates:

- Knowledge of the design, installation, maintenance, testing or inspection of signal and train control systems and their capabilities and limitations;
- Knowledge of applicable Federal laws and regulations pertaining to railroad signal and train control systems; and
- Knowledge of locomotive braking systems and their relationship to and interface with train control or automatic train stop systems and braking distances.

### **TRACK**

Progressively responsible experience which demonstrates:

- Knowledge of railroad track system construction, maintenance, testing or inspection techniques;
- Knowledge of the capabilities and limitations of various track system configurations; and
- Knowledge of Federal railroad track safety standards.

### **MOTIVE POWER AND EQUIPMENT**

Progressively responsible experience which demonstrates:

- Knowledge of the design, maintenance, or inspection of various types of locomotives and freight cars currently in use and their capabilities and limitations;
- Knowledge of the installation, maintenance, or testing of railroad safety appliances and power

- brakes, their capabilities and limitations; and
- Knowledge of applicable Federal laws and regulations pertaining to inspection and testing of locomotives, freight cars, safety appliances, and power brakes.

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Progressively responsible experience which demonstrates:

- Practical knowledge of the typical reactions of different hazardous commodities to various environmental conditions and of safe procedures for containing or controlling fires, leaks, or explosions of these materials;
- Knowledge of the construction, testing and retesting of containers used to ship hazardous materials by rail; and
- Knowledge of Federal regulations and standards governing the shipment of hazardous materials by rail including containerization, loading, handling, documentation, and placarding.

## OPERATING PRACTICES

Progressively responsible experience which demonstrates:

- Knowledge of railroad operating practices, rules, and procedures, especially as they relate to safety issues; and
- Knowledge of Federal regulations and standards relating to railroad operations and requirements in such areas as hours of service, accident

## Equal Employment Opportunity

All qualified applicants will receive consideration for appointment without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, handicapping condition, marital status, political affiliation or any other non-merit factor.

## HOW TO APPLY

### Where to Get a Complete Application Package:

Application packages may be obtained from the Federal Railroad Administration's Office of Human Resources by calling (202) 493-6112.

### What to Submit:

1. **Required:** Information required as outlined in the Flyer OF-510, "Applying for a Federal Job." ([www.opm.gov/forms/html/of.htm](http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/of.htm)) Applicants may submit this information in any written format. Resumes; Applications for Federal

reporting, blue signal protection of workers, rear end markers, radio communication, railroad employee qualifications and railroad employee testing.

For a Railroad Safety Inspector position at the GS-12 grade level, at least 52 weeks of the required experience must have been at a level of difficulty and responsibility comparable to the next lower grade in the Federal service. In addition, all applicants must meet the physical requirements of the position.

## Unpaid Experience and Volunteer Work

Credit will be given for unpaid experience or volunteer work on the same basis as for paid experience (that is, it must be of the type and level acceptable as listed above). Therefore, you may, if you wish, report such experience at the end of your employment history if you believe that it represents qualifying experience for the position for which you are applying. To represent qualifying experience for the position for which you are applying and to receive credit, you must show the actual time, such as number of hours per week, spent in such activities.

## Motor Vehicle License

All Railroad Safety Inspectors are required to possess a valid state drivers license at all times while employed by the FRA in order to perform the duties of their positions.

Employment, SF-171s; or Optional Applications for Federal Employment, OF-612s ([www.opm.gov/forms/html/of.htm](http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/of.htm)) will be accepted.

2. **Required:** FRA F120, Supplemental Qualifications Statement.
3. **Optional:** Background Survey Questionnaire, OPM Form 1386.
4. All veterans who wish to claim a 5-point or 10-point veterans preference, must submit a copy of their DD 214, Certificate of Release. If you are a veteran claiming a 10-point veterans preference, you must complete Standard Form 15, Claim for 10-point Veteran Preference ([www.opm.gov/forms/html/sf.htm](http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/sf.htm)), and submit the documentary proof. This form is available from the Veterans Administration or by calling the Federal Railroad Administration's Job Information Hotline on (202) 366-0584. To determine if you are eligible for veterans preference, please consult the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's VetGuide, [www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.htm](http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.htm).

**NOTE:** When completing the Geographic Availability Form, which is located at the end of the Supplemental Qualifications Statement, keep in mind that you should check only those locations where you would consider employment. Whether or not a job is vacant at the time of application is irrelevant since jobs may become available at any time. Further, keep in mind the cost of living at each location and that the Federal Railroad Administration **will not** pay for any moving/relocation expenses. If you qualify, you will receive automatic consideration for positions in the geographic duty locations you expressed an interest in being employed. Due to the large volume of qualified applicants, your specific order of preference **cannot** be taken into consideration. Railroad Safety Inspectors may participate in the FRA's Telecommuting Program in which employees perform their work at home, at a satellite work center, or any other approved work site. Telecommuting can be done on a permanent or ad hoc basis and is subject to supervisory approval.

## **VETERANS**

The Defense Authorization Act of November 18, 1997, extended veterans' preference to persons who served on active duty during the Gulf War from August 2, 1990, through January 2, 1992. The law grants preference to persons otherwise eligible and who served on active duty during this period, regardless of where the person served or for how long. The law also authorizes the Secretary of each military department to award the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for service in Bosnia during the period November 20, 1995, to a date to be determined. The award of the Medal is qualifying for Veterans' preference. More information on veterans' preference is available in the VetGuide that may be found on the United States Office of Personnel Management web site at [www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.htm](http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.htm).

## **WHERE TO SEND YOUR APPLICATION:**

### **Forms listed above should be sent to:**

You may **mail or deliver** your application to the Federal Railroad Administration, Office of Human Resources, 1120 Vermont Avenue, NW., 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Washington, DC 20590.

If you are faxing your application, please limit the application to **a maximum of 20 pages** and include a cover sheet. Our fax number is (202) 493-6169. We will not accept applications faxed from a Federal Government fax machine.

**Note: Applications received in postage-paid Government envelopes will not be considered since it is a violation of Federal law and regulation to use these envelopes for this purpose. In addition, in accordance with Department of Transportation policy, the FRA will not accept applications if there is evidence that they were sent from Federal Government Fax machines.**

## **DISPLACED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES**

Federal employees of the Department of Transportation and other Federal agencies may apply for priority consideration under this announcement for Railroad Safety Inspector positions at the GS-12 grade level. For additional information on the documentation that needs to be submitted with your application, please contact your servicing personnel office or the FRA's Office of Human Resources on (202) 493-6112. Applications received from eligible candidates will be considered for position vacancies in priority order in accordance with FRA Order 3352.1B.

## **LENGTH OF ELIGIBILITY**

Qualified applicants will receive employment consideration for 12 months from the issue date of the eligible Notice of Rating. To extend the period of eligibility for an additional 12 months, eligible applicants must submit written notification to the Federal Railroad Administration's Office of Human Resources. Requests for extension of the eligibility period should be sent prior to the expiration date of the Notice of Rating, but no earlier than two months prior to the scheduled expiration date.

## **THE FRA'S OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT YOU RETAIN A COPY OF YOUR APPLICATION FOR YOUR PERSONAL RECORDS.**

The Federal Railroad Administration is prohibited from making copies of applications.

**All applications received will be rated only for the specialization(s) for which application is being made.**

**NOTE:** All applicants will receive a written response for the Office of Human Resources stating whether or not they qualify for the position(s) for which they applied. Due to the large volume of applications

received by the Office of Human Resources, **it may take 8 to 16 weeks to receive a response regarding the final determination of an applicant's qualifications.** However, all applications received prior to filling a specific Railroad Safety Inspector position will be rated before referring a list of qualified candidates to the selecting official.

### **PREEMPLOYMENT DRUG TEST**

The selectees for Railroad Safety Inspector positions with the Federal Railroad Administration, will be required to submit to a urinalysis for illegal drug use prior to appointment unless presently employed in a U.S. Department of Transportation position which requires drug testing. Individuals with confirmed positive drug test results shall be refused employment. In addition, the selectees for Railroad Safety Inspector positions are subject to random drug testing.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The Federal Railroad Administration has determined that seniority rights and leaves of absence from railroads constitutes an actual or an appearance of a

conflict of interest. Therefore, any individual who is selected for a Railroad Safety Inspector position from the National Railroad Safety Inspector Register will be required to divest all reemployment rights, seniority rights or leaves of absence from railroads held at the conclusion of the required one year probationary period, which begins with the date of appointment. Divestiture is a requisite to continued employment with the Federal Railroad Administration. No waivers will be granted of the divestiture requirement.

**NOTICE:** The selectees for Railroad Safety Inspector positions will be required to complete a Declaration for Federal Employment to determine suitability for Federal employment and to authorize a background investigation.

**The National Railroad Safety Inspector Register is not in any way a seniority list and there is no guarantee of employment regardless of the amount of time that an applicant's name remains on the National Register.**